

SUBMITTING WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Generously shared by Liz Tentarelli, President of League of Women Voters-NH

Written testimony: Use a letterhead, if your organization has one. If an individual, you can skip a header.

Date [the date the testimony is given to the committee]

To: Chair [name] and members, House [Name of Committee] [or Senate Name of Committee]

From: [Your name, plus title within your organization if that applies. Also email, phone number if you wish, town]

Re: [bill number, such as **SB 789**] [shortened version of bill title, such **open meeting laws**]

Opening paragraph should make clear the intent of your testimony and repeat the bill number.

[for example, “On behalf of the Organization for Good Government, I urge the committee to recommend **Ought To Pass on SB789**, which would create a commission to study existing local and county policies on open meeting procedures.” I like to put the bill number and position in bold in the opening paragraph.

State your testimony, in fairly short paragraphs for each topic. Reference any materials you are providing in an appendix. [see appendix 3]

Closing—We [I] urge you to vote Ought To Pass on SB789.

Find out how many members the committee has. Make that many copies plus one for the files of the committee.

You can find the list of committees, when they meet, and the members’ names from this webpage:

<http://www.gencourt.state.nh.us/house/committees/housecommittees.aspx>

Most of the committees you’ll be interested in are ‘standing committees.’

If you have written testimony, hand copies to the person on one end of the U shaped tables who seems to be taking the testimony cards.

Don’t read your testimony: committees don’t like it. Practice what you’ll say, but stay conversational and make eye-contact with the members.

Open with “Thank you for allowing me to present testimony in support of this bill. My name is Jane Doe, and I represent [organization], a group of citizens very concerned with fair and open government.”...

Summarize or hit a couple of main points.

Include a personal example if you can make it short and interesting.

Don’t repeat what others have said unless you have specifics to add. Don’t say, I won’t repeat what others have said.

Close with something like “I urge you to support SB789, and I am happy to take questions.”

If they ask questions:

Custom seems to be to say “Thank you for the question....No, I don’t believe that would apply in this case because...”

Don’t fake your answers. If you don’t know, but think you can find out, say so and promise to send that information to the chair. Or say, “That’s an interesting question I haven’t considered....”

If they don’t ask anything, just say “Thank you for the opportunity to speak.” and stand up.